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**(54) IMAGE ENCODER AND DECODER**

outputted as an encoded signal 1012.

**(57) Abstract:**

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**PURPOSE:** To provide the image encoder and decoder with which efficiency is improved by performing vector quantization to an intermediate level value but performing hierarchical ternary pattern encoding to binary information while utilizing that the intermediate level value of area shape/transmission degree information as an input signal is low and the distribution of picture element values is made eccentric to a binary value.

**CONSTITUTION:** A vector quantizing means 1004 performs the vector quantization to a block signal 1003, for which an input signal 1001 of the area shape/transmission degree information is divided by a block means 1002, and outputs an index signal 1005 and a vector quantized pattern signal 1006. The vector quantized pattern signal 1006 is converted to a ternary pattern signal 1008 by a ternarizing means 1007, further hierarchized by a hierarchizing means 1009 and outputted as a hierarchized pattern signal 1010. These hierarchized pattern signal 1010 and index signal 1005 are encoded by a code train generating means 1011 and

